

REMARKS

This amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action having a mailing date of November 15, 2005. Claims 1, 5, 8-9, and 15-16 are amended as shown. Claims 10 and 13-14 were previously canceled. No new matter has been added by this amendment. With this amendment, claims 1-9, 11-12, and 15-23 are pending in the application.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5, and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Partovi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,059). Claims 1-9, 11-12, and 15-23 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nilsson (U.S. Patent No. 6,605,935) in view of Pricer (U.S. Patent No. 5,673,005). For the reasons set forth below, the applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections and request that the pending claims be allowed.

A disclosed embodiment will now be discussed in comparison to the applied references. Of course, the discussion of the disclosed embodiment, and the discussion of the differences between the disclosed embodiment and subject matter described in the applied references, do not define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, such discussed differences are intended to merely help the Examiner appreciate important claim distinctions discussed thereafter.

One embodiment disclosed by the present applicants is shown in Figure 5 of the present application. In Figure 5, a symmetrization element 230 is coupled to the output terminals (such as the outputs UP and DW) of the first and second bistable elements (such as the flip-flops 200a and 200b), with the symmetrization element 230 including two transistors N3 and N4 having control terminals coupled to the respective output terminals of the first and second bistable elements.

In a particular example, one transistor (*e.g.*, the transistor N4) has its gate terminal coupled to the output UP of the flip-flop 200a, and the other transistor (*e.g.*, the transistor N3) has its gate terminal coupled to the output DW of the flip-flop 200b. In one embodiment, the transistors N3 and N4 of the symmetrization element 230 are coupled in series or otherwise inserted in a same circuit branch. *See, e.g.*, Figure 5 of the present application.

In pages 2-3 of the present Office Action, the Examiner states that Partovi discloses the “symmetrization element” corresponding to the two inverters 830 and 832 (in his

Figure 8), which according to the Examiner, represents “two transistors coupled in series having gates coupled to a common node.” The applicant respectfully disagrees with this interpretation of Partovi.

These two transistors of Partovi are presumably the pull-down N-channel MOSFETs (or the pull-up P-channel MOSFETs) of the two inverters 830 and 832, with one transistor having its gate connected to the output of the latch 806, and with the other transistor having its gate connected to the output of the latch 808. In Partovi, the two transistors (*e.g.*, the two pull-down N-channel MOSFETs, or the pull-up P-channel MOSFETs, or one pull-down N-channel MOSFET and one pull-up P-channel MOSFET) of the two inverters 830 and 832 are not coupled in series and/or do not belong to a same circuit branch. For example, the presence of the NAND gate 828 that receives the outputs of the inverters 830 and 832 prevent the two transistors of the respective two inverters 830 and 832 from being interpreted as being coupled in series and/or in a same circuit branch.

With regards to Nilsson and Pricer, the Examiner has acknowledged on page 4 of the Office Action that Nilsson does not disclose two transistors of the symmetrization element. To supply the missing teachings of Nilsson, the Examiner has cited the transistors 34 and 35 in Figure 3 of Pricer. However, the transistors 34 and 35 of Pricer are clearly coupled in parallel (via the nodes 42 and 36), and thus are not coupled in series and/or in a same circuit branch.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 5, and 15 are amended to recite that the two transistors are coupled in series. As explained above, this feature is not disclosed, taught, or suggested by any of the cited references, whether singly or in combination. For example, the NAND gate 828 prevents the series coupling of the transistors in the inverters 830 and 832 of Partovi. Nilsson does not provide the two transistors, and the two transistors of Pricer are connected in parallel. Therefore, independent claims 1, 5, and 15 are now allowable.

Independent claims 8, 9, and 16 are amended to recite that the two transistors are in a same circuit branch. Again, these features are not disclosed, taught, or suggested by any of the cited references, whether singly or in combination. The inverters 830 and 832 of Partovi are in two different circuit branches, which then connect to the NAND gate 828. Nilsson does not disclose the two transistors, and the two transistors 34 and 35 of Pricer are in two different circuit branches connected in parallel. Accordingly, independent claims 8, 9, and 16 are allowable.

Overall, none of the references singly or in any motivated combination disclose, teach, or suggest what is recited in the independent claims. Thus, given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, the independent claims are now in condition for allowance. The dependent claims that depend directly or indirectly on these independent claims are likewise allowable based on at least the same reasons and based on the recitations contained in each dependent claim.

If the applicants' attorney Dennis M. de Guzman has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to the allowability of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Mr. de Guzman at (206) 622-4900.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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